



# Business Watch

## SANDY CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

*Chief Stephen Chapman*

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Get to know your business neighbors. The better you know the people who work in your neighboring businesses, the more likely you are to look out for each other. So make personal contact and let them know you are a member of Business Watch. Talk about how you can work together to prevent crime and keep an eye on each other's business.



In turn, businesses can notify the Sandy City Police Department of crimes or suspicious activity at their location.  
9-1-1 or  
Non emergency phone number:  
840-4000

We, at the Sandy City Police Department, wish you a crime free holiday season.

Dawn Black  
Crime Prevention  
Specialist  
568-7200





# Holiday Shopping Brings Shoplifters

With the slumping economy and the holiday season, shoplifters will seize the opportunity to make way with merchandise accessible to them. Merchants can take a few steps to help minimize becoming a victim of this crime.

If possible:

- If you see it, report it
- Increase public awareness
- Try to avoid apathy
- Greet every customer as they enter
- Increase private security guards
- Hire off duty police officers
- Install one-way mirrors
- Supply walkie-talkies and loudspeakers
- Have electronic tags
- Advertise that you will prosecute shoplifters
- Give shoplifting informational brochures in your shopping bags
- Pay attention, observe and watch suspicious activity
- Have clear procedures for your employees to follow if they suspect a shoplifter
- Set your store up so that employees can see everything that is going on
- Mount mirrors in corners so there are no blind spots
- Place expensive items behind the counter or in locked glass tops
- Know what to look for
  - ⇒ Bulky clothing, secret pockets, pregnancy
  - ⇒ Packages, bags, backpacks, purses, strollers
  - ⇒ Hollowed-out books, folded newspapers or magazines, umbrellas
  - ⇒ Nervousness, wandering eyes, loitering, distractions, hands
  - ⇒ Price tag switching



Store areas at greater risk of shoplifting include those with the most desirable merchandise. Merchandise on the ground floor and near entrances are at greater risk of theft, because the shoplifter is in the store for less time and is thus at less risk of getting caught.

## Other areas of concern:

- Many exits, particularly where they are accessible without passing by the checkout
- Blind corners and hidden alcoves;
- Restrooms or changing rooms;
- High displays that conceal shoppers (and shoplifters) from view
- Crowded areas around displays of high-risk items
- Aisles that staff cannot easily see



## Statistics and facts

Over the past few years, shoplifting has increased 33%. Sandy City is no exception. Out of every dollar you spend in a store \$.2-3 cents goes to pay for the things shoplifters take and increased security \$5 Billion in merchandise is stolen from stores every year 1 person in 10 is a shoplifter.

### **All kinds of people shoplift**

- There is no such thing as the “typical” shoplifter.
- Young juveniles make up about 40% of all shoplifters
- Girls greatly outnumber boys
- Most of these juveniles (18 and under) come from middle-income, suburban homes.
- Shoplifters are your average customers. People from all economic, educational and family backgrounds.
- Drug addicts often become shoplifters in order to support their habit.
- Internal theft committed by employees.
- These employees can range from store clerks to top executives
- Employee theft is a major problem for retail stores, especially those with a high job turnover and many temporary personnel. Workers might also allow their friends to steal.
- Professional shoplifters
- Steal “on order” shoplifting goods that they sell to their own customers at bargain prices.
- Usually steal expensive items
- Kleptomaniacs—Compulsive stealers who are unable to stop themselves from theft. Make up less than 1% of all shoplifters

### **Laws are getting tougher**

- Stores are starting to apprehend suspects before they leave the store-Be careful!!
- Juvenile shoplifters are being brought to court
- Convictions are being passed and shoplifters are spending time in jail and facing larger fines
- Police records of shoplifting are being taken much more seriously
- A shoplifting record can now keep people out of certain professions; can harm chances of getting into college and even getting a loan.



## **Holiday Crime**

Criminals love the holiday season! This is particularly due to the increased opportunity for crime. Stores and malls are packed with shoppers and the distractions make it easier for criminals to go unnoticed. All kinds of people commit property crimes. The criminals can be the average customers from all kinds of economic, educational, and family backgrounds.

There is no such thing as the “typical” shoplifter. Increased opportunity and financial stress can make criminals out of people who wouldn’t otherwise be committing crimes. In 2007, Sandy City Police Department took 138 case reports on retail theft in November and December, compared to only 99 in September and October. This shows an increase of 39%. This year shoplifting is already on the rise in 122 cases in September and October.

Fraud and forgery also increases during the holiday season. According to the National Retail Federation, retailers lost \$11.8 billion to return fraud in 2007, up \$1 billion from 2006. They are expecting fraudulent merchandise returns to total \$3.5 billion during this holiday season alone.

Businesses and shoppers are likely to see a large increase in property crime this holiday season. Criminals tend to lurk with increased frequency during the holidays and crime historically goes up during times of economic slowdowns. Do your part to make the holidays a safe, happy, and crime free time for everyone!

Nicole Varela  
Sandy City Police Department Crime Analysis Unit

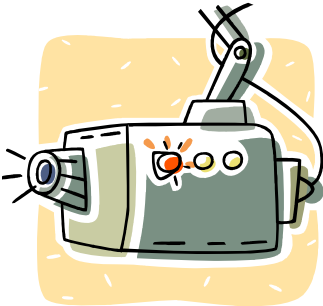
## **Robbery Prevention Captain Kevin Thacker– Detective Division**

If you have watched the news lately you have probably noticed there seem to be more robberies occurring in the Salt Lake valley. We can attribute this to the economy, the time of year or numerous other reasons. Where we really need to focus is on what you and your employees can do to prevent becoming victims yourselves. I have listed a few ideas I hope will help.

- Set up your business so you can be seen from outside. If someone wants to rob you they do not want to be seen by everyone walking past the window.
- Be observant as to what is happening both inside and outside of your business. Often times would-be robbers will “hang around” before they actually attempt to carry out a robbery. They may sit in a car in the parking lot for an unusually long time or they may pace around outside before entering the business. If you see someone who is acting suspicious don’t be afraid to call the police.
- Make notes of what you see... license plate numbers, (including state), descriptions of cars or persons including any facial hair, scars, tattoos etc. It is much easier to pass on accurate information if you are not depending on memory alone!
- If you are robbed please cooperate! Stay calm and do your best to keep the robber as calm as possible. There is nothing in the business that you could give them that is more important than your safety! Try to see how the robber leaves, (on foot, in a car, what direction did he go?). Call 9-1-1 immediately!
- These ideas will not prevent all robberies but they will help you be better prepared in the event a robbery does occur. If you have further questions or would like more information do not hesitate to call the police department. They are there to help you and they can offer suggestions to help prevent you being a victim.

## Internal Theft

Business Watch Crime Alert! On average, 80% of all crime related losses suffered by businesses are due to employee theft. When you realize all business crime losses and for that matter all business profits are affected by employee behavior, it is easy to see that your employees can be your greatest asset or your worst enemy. Which of these two categories they fit into depends primarily on the actions you take to safeguard your business from this type of crime. You are responsible for setting basic policies and standards of honesty for your employees. It is also your responsibility to train and supervise your employees. You may need to re-evaluate your hiring practices to include background and credit checks on potential employees.



Some crime prevention tips to help decrease internal theft include; hiring honest people. To ensure that you hire the most honest people make sure they fill out a complete application. Once their application is filled out, check all of the information for accuracy and make sure to check all references including personal, work and credit.

Next, install video observation cameras. These cameras will deter internal theft as well as robbery and "smash and grab" crimes. Make sure employees know the company policy and that they understand termination as well as prosecution will result if they are caught stealing. Be a good example to your employees.

Watch for product going out the back door during deliveries. Talk with disgruntled employees about their issues. Distraught employees will often use their "poor" working conditions to justify internal theft. Finally, be accountable for everything. Make sure employees account for every item that turns up as lost or stolen. Make them participate in inventory counts so they are aware that you are paying attention to merchandise in the store as well as their actions.



If you would like more information on becoming a member of the Sandy City Police Business Watch Program please contact Crime Prevention Specialist Dawn Black by phone at 568-6096 or email at [dblack@sandy.utah.gov](mailto:dblack@sandy.utah.gov). Please include your business name, contact person, fax number or email address.



[www.sandy.utah.gov](http://www.sandy.utah.gov)



# YOU, FRAUD AND THE HOLIDAYS

## Detective Marty Hooker

The new Holiday Season is fast approaching and the shoppers are flocking to the stores to spend their money. This is also the time of year when the "Bandits" come out in force to victimize citizens by stealing their identity, credit cards and checks.



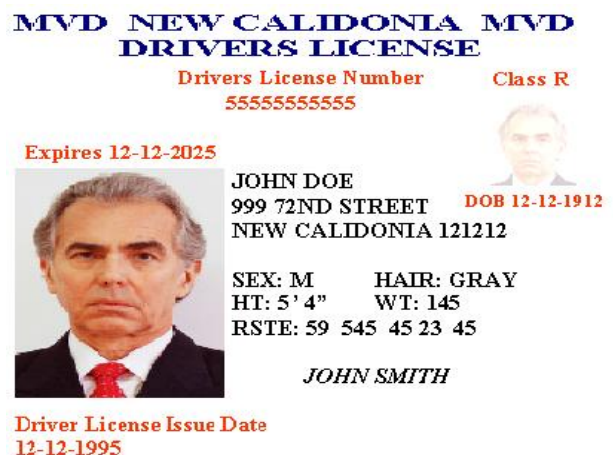
Recently Sandy City has seen an increase in vehicle and residential burglaries. The numbers for the first half of November are almost the same as the total vehicle and residential burglaries from October. In many of these burglaries the targets are purses and wallets which contain money, credit cards, checks, social security cards and many other valuable items that lead to identity theft and fraud.

The "Bandits" will use credit cards as soon as possible after a theft because they know the cards will be canceled as soon as the owner is made aware of the theft. The "Bandits" will go to the "all night" businesses such as Walmart, Target, Smith's, 7-Eleven and other convenience type stores where they purchase fuel for several vehicles and usually use the furthest pump away from the clerk. They use "pay at the pump" procedures to avoid the surveillance videos. They will also make large merchandise purchases and/or gift cards using the stolen credit card or checks. These transactions are usually made in the middle of the night when the business can not check with the bank on the validity of the checks. They will have ID to use with the checks because it was stolen at the same time.

Unfortunately, these types of thefts and forgeries cause multiple problems for the victim and the business. The merchant is out the money because the checks and credit card purchases will be charged back to them. The victim has to deal with several businesses wanting their money as well as the negative impact it can have on their credit report rating. It can take several months to a year or more to clear identity theft problems off your credit report.

There are some basic tactics to help prevent you from becoming a victim and maintaining the profitability of the business. These procedures, though simple, will make prosecution more possible when the case goes to court.

1. Always check the photo on the ID used with the person making the purchase. If you are not sure of the person, ask for a second ID.



2. If the drivers license number is already written on the check, ask to see the license to verify the number. "Bandits" just make up a number. Remember, all Utah drivers licenses should have nine (9) numbers. Some of the older licenses will have less until renewal and then the state will put zeros (0) in front of the number to make a total of nine numbers. Always put the ID number on the check and the initials of the clerk who handled the transaction.
3. When large purchases are made in the middle of the night, be more diligent on verifying the ID of the customer.
4. When credit cards are used, ask for picture ID and tell them it is for their protection.
5. If the customer goes through several credit cards before one is approved may be an indication the credit cards may be stolen. Check for proper picture ID.



Other scams are the sticker price switch and the fraudulent returns. These are where a "Bandit" will put a cheaper price sticker on a more expensive item and pay the lower price. The fraudulent return is where the "Bandit" finds or makes a receipt and goes into the store, picks out the item, then takes it to the customer service desk and asks for a refund. One way to resolve this type of scam is to verify the identity of the customer. If the return is later found to be a scam, the "Bandit" can be identified and may be charged with the crime.

There are as many scams and frauds as there are "Bandits". They keep coming up with new ways to cheat businesses and hurt citizens. Vigilance and attention to detail will help reduce the chance of becoming a victim.

#### **Additional precautions:**

Businesses may obtain parking lot signs from the Sandy City Police Department telling customers to lock and secure their vehicles and not leave anything of value in their vehicle.

Only carry the credit cards you need. Leave the rest home in a safe place.

**Do Not** carry social security cards or passports in your purse, wallet or car.

